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17 Attorneys for Plaintiffs

18 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

19 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, FRESNO DIVISION

20 JOSE RUBEN HERNANDEZ GOMEZ;  
SALESH PRASAD; GUILLERMO  
21 MEDINA REYES; EDGAR SANCHEZ;  
ADAN CASTILLO MERINO; IVAN  
22 OLIVA SIERRA; FIDEL GARCIA,  
ISAAC CARDONA HERNANDEZ, and  
23 PEDRO JESUS FIGUEROA PADILLA,  
individually and on behalf of all others  
24 similarly situated,

25 Plaintiffs,

26 v.

26 THE GEO GROUP, INC.; and DOES 1  
27 through 10, inclusive,  
28 Defendants.

Case No. 1:22-CV-00868-ADA-CDB

**SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT**

Judge: Hon. Ana de Alba  
Magistrate: Hon. Christopher D. Baker

Trial Date: None Set

## INTRODUCTION

1  
2       1.       This action arises from systematic and unlawful wage theft, unjust  
3 enrichment, and forced labor at two of Defendant GEO Group, Inc.’s (“GEO”) civil  
4 immigration detention facilities in California—Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center (“Mesa  
5 Verde”) and Golden State Annex ICE Processing Center (“Golden State Annex,” and  
6 collectively “Facilities”).

7       2.       Mesa Verde is a civil, not criminal, immigration detention center that GEO  
8 owns and operates for profit in Bakersfield, California. It is a former prison with a 400-  
9 person capacity, and is used to detain people whose immigration status is contested. GEO  
10 has operated Mesa Verde as a civil immigration detention center since 2015.

11       3.       Golden State Annex is a separate civil, not criminal, immigration detention  
12 center that GEO owns and operates for profit in McFarland, California. It is a former  
13 correctional facility and serves as an annex location to Mesa Verde. It has a 700-person  
14 capacity and is also used to detain people whose immigration status is contested. GEO has  
15 operated Golden State Annex as a civil immigration detention center since September  
16 2020.

17       4.       GEO is a multibillion-dollar corporation that owns and operates detention  
18 facilities around the world. GEO operates at least fourteen civil immigration detention  
19 centers in the United States, including the Facilities. GEO has made billions in revenue  
20 from its contracts with United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) to  
21 operate these facilities.

22       5.       Although it is contractually required to provide all essential detention  
23 services at the Facilities, GEO uses the free or nearly-free labor of civilly detained  
24 immigrants to perform those services to maximize profits.

25       6.       GEO pays detained immigrants just \$1 per day, or nothing at all, to maintain  
26 and operate the Facilities. Detained workers perform basic and necessary tasks, such as  
27 cleaning shared showers, sinks, and toilets; sweeping, mopping, and waxing floors; and  
28 cleaning surfaces like walls, dining and other tables, chairs, windows, and handrails.

1 Others work as painters in the facilities or assist detained people with disabilities to  
2 perform their daily activities.

3 7. Detained workers are paid \$1 per day, 5 days per week for their formally  
4 scheduled shifts. Often, however, the same workers also work for no pay at all, on their  
5 days “off” and during unscheduled hours. Other detained people who are not formally  
6 scheduled to work also perform job duties that are necessary for the basic functioning of  
7 the Facilities.

8 8. This labor is not only unpaid and underpaid. It is also not voluntary in any  
9 meaningful sense. GEO maintains a corporate policy and uniform practice at the Facilities  
10 of depriving detained individuals of necessary cleaning services, personal hygiene  
11 supplies, and other services and items to ensure a ready supply of available labor needed to  
12 operate the Facilities. Detained people are forced to submit to GEO’s \$1 per day scheme,  
13 the so-called “Voluntary” Activities Program (“Work Program”), to buy the basic  
14 necessities—including food, water, and hygiene products—that GEO systematically  
15 deprives them of.

16 9. GEO also fails to staff the Facilities adequately to maintain minimum  
17 standards of cleanliness and sanitation. At times GEO has no outside staff assigned to  
18 clean and sanitize the Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex dorms. GEO also, at times,  
19 fails to hire any detained workers. As a result, detained people must perform janitorial and  
20 custodial services both in the Work Program and informally, outside the Work Program.  
21 They must do so or be forced to live in intolerably filthy conditions, with mold growing in  
22 the showers, a stench emanating from the restrooms, and pests running rampant.

23 10. If and when detained immigrants fail to perform uncompensated or  
24 undercompensated labor, they must live in dirty and unsanitary conditions. Such  
25 conditions were bad enough prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but have been more  
26 harmful and even dangerous since the pandemic began. The pandemic has rendered the  
27 basic cleaning and sanitation tasks unpaid and underpaid detained people perform even  
28 more critical and the pressure on detained people to perform these tasks has only

1 increased.

2 11. In the Facilities, GEO also requires detained immigrants to perform  
3 uncompensated work under threat of or actual disciplinary action. Disciplinary action can  
4 result in placement in segregated housing and criminal prosecution. Both can interfere  
5 with detained individuals' ability to qualify for immigration relief.

6 12. Detained immigrants also are threatened with the loss of recreation, chow,  
7 law library and telephone access, and lose their work assignments if they protest the  
8 inadequate pay. GEO staff withhold access to ICE-mandated outdoor exercise from entire  
9 dormitories if individual detained workers do not work.

10 13. Detained immigrants are charged fees to use ICE tablets to access email and  
11 video visit with their loved ones. They also must use money in their accounts to call, text  
12 message, and retrieve voicemails from their loved ones, friends, and other contacts. Many  
13 detained people do not have a source of income to access these services, other than earning  
14 \$1 per day in the Work Program.

15 14. Forced and underpaid labor is part of GEO's business model. GEO  
16 significantly reduces its labor costs and expenses, and increases its already vast profits, by  
17 intentionally and unlawfully forcing and coercing detained immigrants to perform labor at  
18 subminimum wages, or without pay at all.

19 15. The under- and uncompensated labor GEO extracts from immigrants  
20 detained in the Facilities is neither required nor permitted by ICE's Performance-Based  
21 National Detention Standards ("PBNDS") or GEO's contracts with ICE. GEO's contracts  
22 with ICE do not require GEO to pay detained immigrants \$1 per day, or nothing at all;  
23 GEO sets detained workers' pay rate within its discretion.

24 16. GEO's policies and practices violate California minimum wage law,  
25 California common law, the California Unfair Competition Law, and the California and  
26 federal Trafficking Victims Protection Acts, which prohibit forced labor.

27 17. Plaintiffs Jose Ruben Hernandez Gomez; Saleshe Prasad; Guillermo Medina  
28 Reyes; Edgar Sanchez; Adan Castillo Merino; Ivan Oliva Sierra; Fidel Garcia; Isaac

1 Cardona Hernandez; and Pedro Jesus Figueroa Padilla, individually and on behalf of all  
2 others similarly situated, bring this class action lawsuit to stop the economic exploitation  
3 of detained immigrants in GEO's care, to recover unpaid wages, and to remedy the unjust  
4 enrichment resulting from GEO's unlawful failure to pay its detained workforce legal  
5 wages at the Facilities.

## 6 JURISDICTION AND VENUE

7 18. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331  
8 because this action arises under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 1589  
9 *et seq.*

10 19. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to the Class Action  
11 Fairness Act of 2005, 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d), because at least one class member is of diverse  
12 citizenship from one defendant; there are more than 100 class members; the aggregate  
13 amount in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000; and minimal diversity exists.

14 20. Plaintiffs request that this Court exercise supplemental jurisdiction pursuant  
15 to 28 U.S.C. § 1367 over their state law claims arising under the California Minimum  
16 Wage Law, California Labor Law, and the California Unfair Competition Law.

17 21. Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) because the  
18 events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in this District.

19 22. This Court has personal jurisdiction over GEO because the corporation  
20 regularly conducts business in California and has sufficient minimum contacts with  
21 California.

## 22 PARTIES

23 23. Plaintiff Jose Ruben Hernandez Gomez is an adult resident of Bakersfield,  
24 California. From November 26, 2021 through January 4, 2022, Mr. Hernandez Gomez  
25 was detained at Golden State Annex. From January 4, 2022 through the present,  
26 Mr. Hernandez Gomez has been detained at Mesa Verde.

27 24. Plaintiff Saleshe Prasad is an adult resident of San Francisco, California.  
28 From August 19, 2021 through December 6, 2022, Mr. Prasad was detained at Golden

1 State Annex.

2 25. Plaintiff Guillermo Medina Reyes is an adult resident of McFarland,  
3 California. From December 9, 2021 through the present, Mr. Medina Reyes has been  
4 detained at Golden State Annex.

5 26. Plaintiff Edgar Sanchez is an adult resident of Los Angeles, California.  
6 From April 1, 2021 through February 24, 2022, Mr. Sanchez was detained at Golden State  
7 Annex.

8 27. Plaintiff Adan Castillo Merino is an adult resident of Panoramic City,  
9 California. From November 6, 2020 through September 8, 2022, Mr. Castillo Merino was  
10 detained at Golden State Annex.

11 28. Plaintiff Ivan Oliva Sierra is an adult resident of Compton, California. From  
12 January 12, 2021 through June 12, 2022, Mr. Oliva Sierra was detained at Golden State  
13 Annex.

14 29. Plaintiff Fidel Garcia is an adult resident of McFarland, California. From  
15 July 12, 2021 through the present, Mr. Garcia has been detained at Golden State Annex.

16 30. Plaintiff Isaac Cardona Hernandez is an adult resident of Bakersfield,  
17 California. From July 1, 2021 through October 2021, he was detained at Golden State  
18 Annex. In October 2021, he was transferred to Mesa Verde, where he has been detained  
19 since.

20 31. Plaintiff Pedro Jesus Figueroa Padilla is an adult resident of Bakersfield,  
21 California. From October 29, 2021 through November 22, 2021 he was housed at Golden  
22 State Annex. On November 22, 2021 he was transferred to Mesa Verde, where he  
23 continues to reside.

24 32. Defendant GEO is a for-profit multinational corporation providing  
25 correctional, detention, and community reentry services. GEO is a Florida corporation,  
26 with its principal office located at 624 NW 53rd Street, Suite 700, Boca Raton, Florida  
27 33487.

28 33. Defendants DOES 1-10 are sued herein under fictitious names because

1 Plaintiffs do not presently know their true names and capacities. Plaintiffs will seek leave  
2 to amend this Complaint to allege their true names and capacities when such are  
3 discovered. Plaintiffs allege that each of these Defendants was responsible in some  
4 capacity for the events alleged herein, or is a necessary party for obtaining appropriate  
5 relief. Plaintiffs are informed and believe and thereon allege that in carrying out each of  
6 the acts and violations alleged in this Complaint, each Defendant acted as an agent,  
7 principal, and/or representative for each other Defendant.

## 8 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

### 9 **A. Immigration Detention Is Civil—Not Criminal.**

10 34. Each year, hundreds of thousands of individuals are detained in  
11 geographically isolated immigration detention facilities because their immigration status is  
12 contested. These detained individuals include U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents  
13 (green card holders) with longstanding family and community ties, survivors of torture,  
14 asylum seekers, victims of human trafficking, children, and pregnant women.

15 35. Many of these detained individuals were brought to the United States as  
16 children. Thousands ultimately have their United States citizenship or legal residency  
17 affirmed by an immigration court or federal judge.

18 36. Immigration violations are civil violations, and immigration detention is civil  
19 in nature.<sup>1</sup> Many individuals in immigration detention have no criminal history at all.

20 37. Notwithstanding immigration detention's civil nature and purpose, detained  
21 individuals are often subjected to prison-like conditions. According to the former head of  
22 ICE's Office of Detention Policy and Planning, most are held—systematically and  
23 unnecessarily—under circumstances inappropriate for immigration detention's  
24 noncriminal purposes.<sup>2</sup> Detained immigrants are frequently subjected to punitive and  
25

26 <sup>1</sup> See *Fong Yue Ting v. United States*, 149 U.S. 698, 728–30 (1893) (observing that  
27 deportation proceedings have “all the elements of a civil case” and are “in no proper sense  
a trial or sentence for a crime or offense”).

28 <sup>2</sup> Dora Schriro, U.S. Dep't of Homeland Sec., *Immigration Detention Overview and*



1 long-term solitary confinement, inadequate medical care, sexual and physical assault, and  
 2 other harsh conditions of confinement.<sup>3</sup> In this case, Golden State Annex and Mesa Verde  
 3 residents are housed in carceral facilities that recently have been repurposed for civil  
 4 detention.

5 38. Many detained immigrants submit to deportation simply to obtain release  
 6 from these intolerable conditions, even when they have valid claims to remain in the  
 7 United States, including claims to asylum or other discretionary relief.

8 **B. The Privatization of Immigration Detention and GEO's Economic Windfall**

9 39. Immigration detention in the United States expanded roughly eightfold over  
 10 the past two decades, from a capacity of 5,532 detention beds in 1994<sup>4</sup> to a capacity of  
 11 over 41,000 in 2016.<sup>5</sup> Between February 2019 and January 2021, the total immigration  
 12 detention bed capacity in California nearly doubled, from 4,160 to 7,408 beds.<sup>6</sup> Private  
 13 facilities, like GEO, accounted for 77% of the total immigration detention bed capacity in  
 14 California in February 2019, increasing to 97% as of January 2021.<sup>7</sup>

15 40. The California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 32 in 2019, which banned  
 16 private detention centers in the State, with some limited exceptions.<sup>8</sup> Due to AB 32's  
 17 January 1, 2020 operative date, GEO and ICE scrambled to enter into new contracts

18  
 19 *Recommendations* 10, 15 (2009).

20 <sup>3</sup> See *King v. Cty. of L.A.*, 885 F.3d 548 (9th Cir. 2018).

21 <sup>4</sup> Sharita Gruberg, *How For-Profit Companies Are Driving Immigration Detention*  
 22 *Policies*, Center for American Progress (Dec. 18, 2015),  
 23 <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-for-profit-companies-are-driving-immigration-detention-policies/>.

24 <sup>5</sup> Jenny Jarvie, *This Industry Stands to Benefit from Trump's Crackdown on the Border*,  
 25 L.A. Times (Feb. 14, 2017), <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-immigrant-detention-20170214-story.html>.

26 <sup>6</sup> Cal. Dep't of Just., *Immigration Detention in California* 5 (2021),  
 27 <https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/publications/immigration-detention-2021.pdf>.

28 <sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at i-ii.



1 allowing immigration detention centers, like the Facilities, to continue to operate in  
 2 California.<sup>9</sup> As part of this scramble, GEO expanded Mesa Verde’s capacity from 400 to  
 3 1,800 beds by contracting with ICE to add Golden State Annex and a second annex  
 4 location, both of which are located approximately 30 miles from Mesa Verde.<sup>10</sup>

5 41. As immigration detention has expanded, private prison corporations,  
 6 particularly GEO, have gained an increasing share of the contracts for new detention  
 7 beds.<sup>11</sup>

8 42. GEO officials expect and rely on these lucrative ICE contracts to account for  
 9 a significant percentage of the corporation’s ongoing revenues.<sup>12</sup> Contracts with ICE  
 10 accounted for 33.1% of GEO’s revenues in 2021 and 28.2% in 2020.<sup>13</sup> GEO’s contracts  
 11 with ICE are essential to its profitability and business model.

12 43. GEO’s revenues in 2018, 2019, and 2020 were over \$2 billion per year. Its  
 13 stock is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

14 44. GEO’s economic windfall, and the profitability of its immigration detention  
 15 enterprise, arises from its policy of systemically understaffing and otherwise under-  
 16 resourcing its facilities and thereby underserving detained immigrants. The California  
 17 Department of Justice reported in January 2021 that GEO’s Adelanto Facility “is focused  
 18 on providing detainees with the bare minimum of services required by ICE’s detention  
 19 standards.”<sup>14</sup> Detained people at the Facilities similarly reported in mass surveys in  
 20

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21 <sup>9</sup> *Id.*

22 <sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 5. The second annex to Mesa Verde does not currently house detained people.

23 <sup>11</sup> Bethany Carson & Eleana Diaz, *Payoff: How Congress Ensures Private Prison Profit*  
 24 *with an Immigrant Detention Quota*, Grassroots Leadership 4, 6 (2015),  
[https://grassrootsleadership.org/sites/default/files/reports/quota\\_report\\_final\\_digital.pdf](https://grassrootsleadership.org/sites/default/files/reports/quota_report_final_digital.pdf).

25 <sup>12</sup> The GEO Group, Inc., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 33 (Feb. 28, 2022),  
 26 [https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0000923796/000156459022007652/geo-10k\\_20211231.htm](https://www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0000923796/000156459022007652/geo-10k_20211231.htm)

27 <sup>13</sup> *Id.*

28 <sup>14</sup> See Cal. Dep’t of Just., *Immigration Detention in California* ii (2021).

1 October 2021 that GEO consistently provides inedible, unsanitary, and inadequate food  
2 and nutrition.<sup>15</sup>

3 45. As a uniform policy and practice, GEO provides only the bare minimum to  
4 ensure a readily available, captive labor force that cleans, maintains, and operates the  
5 Facilities for subminimum wages under the threat of disciplinary action and solitary  
6 confinement; abuse of the legal process; loss of privileges, yard time, and work;  
7 inadequate amounts of necessary personal hygiene supplies, water, food, and other  
8 essentials; and unsanitary conditions. Without this nearly free labor, GEO's windfall from  
9 immigrant detention would be substantially decreased.

10 **C. GEO Controls Detained Immigrants' Work in the Work Program; that Work**  
11 **Is Necessary to Maintain and Operate Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.**

12 46. Through its so-called "voluntary" Work Program, GEO hires immigrants  
13 detained at the Facilities to perform work that directly contributes to basic institutional  
14 operations, at a rate of \$1 per day.

15 47. At all times, GEO controls detained workers' wages, hours, and working  
16 conditions.

17 48. Detained people complete and submit an application to be hired into the  
18 Work Program. After submitting an application, they are interviewed. During the  
19 interview, they are asked, among other things, in what positions and shifts they are  
20 interested in working. After workers complete the interview, they are hired into the  
21 program.

22 49. Detained workers are provided safety and general training to perform their  
23 job duties.

24 50. In the Work Program, detained immigrants are required to work according to  
25 an assigned work schedule. Typical work shifts at the Facilities are either an 8-hour  
26

27 <sup>15</sup> See Cal. Collaborative for Immigrant Just., *Starving for Justice: The Denial of Proper*  
28 *Nutrition in Immigration Detention* 7 (2021),  
[https://www.ccijjustice.org/\\_files/ugd/733055\\_c43b1cbbdda341b894045940622a6dc3.pdf](https://www.ccijjustice.org/_files/ugd/733055_c43b1cbbdda341b894045940622a6dc3.pdf).

1 morning shift, or an 8-hour afternoon shift.

2 51. The handbooks for Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex state that GEO  
3 provides all personal protection equipment and work uniforms for those in the Work  
4 Program. For example, detained workers who clean the bathrooms and showers are  
5 provided with and directed to wear gloves and rubber boots. Other detained workers are  
6 trained and expected to wear goggles to perform their work duties.

7 52. In the Work Program, GEO tracks the hours detained immigrants work.

8 53. In the Work Program, GEO credits wages to detained workers' commissary  
9 accounts, typically on a daily basis, as reflected in line items on their accounts.

10 54. When they are hired, detained workers are assigned specific job titles and job  
11 duties.

12 55. GEO informs all detained immigrants entering the Facilities that the  
13 following work assignments may be available through the Work Program:

- 14 (a) Food Service Helper
- 15 (b) Dining Hall Cleaning
- 16 (c) Laundry Assistant
- 17 (d) Sanitation Cleaning
- 18 (e) Dorm Porter
- 19 (f) Haircutter/Barber

20 56. In the course of their labor and employment by GEO, detained immigrants  
21 employed in the Work Program perform a wide range of work, including but not limited  
22 to:

- 23 (a) Scrubbing bathrooms, showers, sinks, and toilets;
- 24 (b) Cleaning tables, eating areas, and telephones;
- 25 (c) Taking out the trash;
- 26 (d) Painting dormitories;
- 27 (e) Assisting individuals with disabilities as an ADA worker;
- 28 (f) Helping other detained immigrants access and use tablets;

- (g) Translating for detained immigrants and staff;
- (h) Sweeping, mopping, and waxing floors throughout the facility;
- (i) Washing laundry;
- (j) Washing dishes;
- (k) Cleaning the kitchen and cafeteria before and after meals;
- (l) Providing barber services to detained immigrants; and
- (m) Cleaning and maintaining hallways, walls, doors, windows, and living and recreational areas.

57. GEO maintains the ability to hire and fire detained immigrant workers in the Work Program.

58. GEO does not pay and has not paid detained immigrant workers the California minimum wage—currently \$15 per hour—for the hours they work at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

59. No clause in GEO’s contract with ICE or any rule or standard incorporated by reference into the contract requires GEO to maximize its profits by underpaying detained workers. GEO’s contracts with ICE do not require it to pay workers in the Work Program just \$1 per day.<sup>16</sup> ICE’s standards set \$1 per day as the floor, but do not limit GEO’s discretion to pay detained workers more than that floor.<sup>17</sup>

60. GEO refers to detained workers participating in the Work Program as “employees.”

61. Detained workers participating in the Work Program and those who perform uncompensated work are “employees” under California’s minimum wage laws.

62. GEO is an “employer” under California’s minimum wage laws.

63. GEO’s contract with ICE requires GEO to comply with all federal, state, and

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<sup>16</sup> *Novoa v. GEO Grp., Inc.*, No. EDCV 17-2514 JGB (SHKx), 2022 WL 2189626, at \*13-14 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 25, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

1 local laws.

2 64. GEO's policies and practices ensure that detained workers continue working  
3 for subminimum wages. The Work Program allows GEO to reduce its operational costs  
4 and increase its own profits substantially.

5 **D. Class Members Are Forced to Work or Be Subject to Discipline.**

6 65. GEO punishes and threatens to punish detained people hired into the Work  
7 Program and those who do not have a formal work assignment, if they do not perform  
8 work in the Facilities.

9 66. The Detainee Handbooks provided to each detained person during intake at  
10 Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex set forth a number of disciplinary infractions and  
11 associated punishments that are enforced against people detained at the Facilities.

12 67. The Detainee Handbooks classify "[r]efusing to clean assigned living area  
13 and/or group activity areas" as a 300-level "High Moderate" offense punishable by, among  
14 other things, up to 72 hours in disciplinary restriction (also known as solitary confinement)  
15 or even criminal prosecution. More than one high moderate or low moderate offense in a  
16 90-day period "shall constitute a high offense," subject to more severe sanctions.

17 68. "Failure to follow safety or sanitation regulations" and "Being unsanitary or  
18 untidy, failing to keep one's quarters in accordance with posted standards" are both 400-  
19 level "Low Moderate" offenses. These offenses are punishable by, among other things,  
20 loss of privileges, property, job, or other program assignment, restriction to the person's  
21 housing unit, or a change in housing unit.

22 69. The Detainee Handbooks also threaten solitary confinement for disobeying  
23 guards, conduct that disrupts the orderly operation of the Facilities, and refusing to comply  
24 with corporate facility policies, including GEO's housing sanitation policies, as discussed  
25 below. These more general offenses can be classified as "Greatest," "High," "High  
26 Moderate," and "Low Moderate," depending on the circumstances. Punishment for these  
27 offenses likewise varies with the particular circumstances.

28 70. "High Offenses" at the 200-level, include offense number 213, "Engaging in,

1 or inciting a group demonstration,” and offense number 214, “Encouraging others to refuse  
2 to work or to participate in a work stoppage.” Punishments for these offenses include  
3 initiating criminal proceedings, disciplinary transfer, disciplinary detention (in solitary  
4 confinement) for up to 30 days, and the loss of privileges, property, or job or other  
5 program assignments.

6 71. Class representatives Adan Castillo Merino, Fidel Garcia, Pedro Jesus  
7 Figueroa Padilla, and Jose Ruben Hernandez Gomez, along with other detained workers,  
8 have initiated work stoppages to protest the conditions in which they are detained. The  
9 detained workers cited inadequate pay, lack of sufficient workers, unsanitary living  
10 conditions, and inadequate personal hygiene, clothing, bedding, food, water, nutrition, and  
11 other supplies and services as reasons for the stoppages.

12 72. As a result of the work stoppages, class representatives and other detained  
13 workers have been charged with disciplinary offenses and placed in solitary confinement.

14 **E. Class Members Are Retaliated Against When They Assert Their Rights Under**  
15 **the Labor Code and to Be Free from Forced Labor.**

16 73. When class members assert their rights to a minimum wage, sanitary and  
17 hygienic living conditions, adequate food, water, and other supplies, and to be free from  
18 forced labor, GEO staff retaliate against them.

19 74. On July 15, two days after the initial complaint in this action was filed,  
20 Mr. Hernandez Gomez—whose name appears in the title of this case—was placed in  
21 quarantine and required to take multiple tests for COVID-19 despite showing no  
22 symptoms. He was told he had to take the tests and be placed in quarantine because GEO  
23 staff reported that he was coughing. These reports were false.

24 75. After receiving a negative rapid test while in quarantine, Mr. Hernandez  
25 Gomez was placed in solitary confinement overnight to await the result of a PCR test,  
26 despite still showing no symptoms of illness. GEO medical staff asked Mr. Hernandez  
27 Gomez to take another PCR test before he was released from solitary confinement.  
28 Mr. Hernandez Gomez was released from solitary confinement only after his outside

1 counsel intervened.

2       76. The solitary confinement cell in which Mr. Hernandez Gomez was placed  
3 was dirty and had previously housed a detained person who had tested positive for  
4 COVID-19. Mr. Hernandez Gomez had to clean the cell during the night he was housed  
5 there.

6       77. Mr. Hernandez Gomez was singled out for placement in solitary confinement  
7 despite having no COVID symptoms, while other individuals who displayed COVID  
8 symptoms, like a cough, were not forced to take multiple COVID tests and placed in  
9 solitary confinement.

10       78. GEO staff did not adequately explain or justify placing Mr. Hernandez  
11 Gomez in solitary confinement, rather than medical isolation. When Mr. Hernandez  
12 Gomez asked why he had been placed in solitary confinement, rather than medical  
13 isolation, for purported COVID symptoms, two GEO staff members told him he was  
14 placed there because of a lawsuit. Although Mesa Verde has been subject to a COVID-19-  
15 related lawsuit, that lawsuit did not require Mr. Hernandez Gomez to be tested multiple  
16 times for COVID after receiving a negative rapid test and did not require him to be placed  
17 in solitary confinement, rather than medical isolation, due to any purported COVID risk.

18       79. Within a few days of Mr. Hernandez Gomez's placement in solitary  
19 confinement, Mr. Figueroa was similarly required to take multiple tests for COVID-19 and  
20 was threatened with solitary confinement despite having no new symptoms.

21       80. Mr. Figueroa had previously contracted COVID-19 and had a lingering  
22 cough. One afternoon on the same week the complaint in this suit was filed, GEO staff  
23 removed Mr. Figueroa from his dorm and told him he had to take a PCR test, even though  
24 he had taken a rapid test earlier that day, and tested negative. He was told that he would  
25 spend three days in solitary confinement if he took the PCR test and 14 days if he did not.  
26 At that point, Mr. Figueroa had been required to take approximately ten tests in a 14-day  
27 period, all of which were negative.

28       81. Mr. Figueroa had also been placed in solitary confinement for eight days the



1 previous month. He was told by two GEO staff members that he was placed in solitary  
2 confinement because of his involvement in organizing a work stoppage.

3 82. On or around August 19, 2022, when Mr. Figueroa noticed that none of his  
4 grievances were being granted at the third and final level, he decided to approach the Mesa  
5 Verde Facility Administrator. The Facility Administrator is responsible for the third and  
6 final level of grievance review. On or around that date, Mr. Figueroa approached the  
7 Facility Administrator and asked why all of his grievances were being denied at the third  
8 level, even when there was video footage proving the conduct he challenged in one of his  
9 grievances. The Facility Administrator became hostile in tone. He responded to  
10 Mr. Figueroa by saying, roughly, “Do you think I am going to agree with your grievances,  
11 so you can make a copy and send it to your attorney and bring me in court?” Mr. Figueroa  
12 understood the Facility Administrator to be referencing this lawsuit and Plaintiffs’ counsel  
13 in this case.

14 83. On August 16, a GEO staff member refused to assist Mr. Garcia when a baby  
15 cockroach was found in the food of a detained person at chow. A few days prior, the staff  
16 member who refused to help had told Mr. Garcia that he was aware of Mr. Garcia’s  
17 involvement in this lawsuit and that he did not want to be left without a job. This staff  
18 member had never refused to help Mr. Garcia in the past, but was not willing to call the  
19 lieutenant to assist with the cockroach in the detained person’s food.

20 84. Mr. Garcia was later charged with engaging in or inciting a group  
21 demonstration after being involved in a sitdown protest of the removal of video visitation  
22 rights. GEO had previously offered free video visits with detained peoples’ families, but it  
23 stopped allowing these visits in September 2022. This requires detained people whose  
24 families are not close enough for in-person visits to pay for expensive calls with family,  
25 forcing them to continue working for less than minimum wage so that they can contact  
26 their loved ones. Although many detained people took part in the sitdown protest, only  
27 those involved in labor stoppages were charged in connection with the protest.

28 85. Rigoberto Hernandez Martinez, another detained person who has been

1 involved in the labor strikes, was also placed in solitary confinement shortly after this  
2 lawsuit was filed and was told that his placement was due to his participation in the work  
3 stoppages. A GEO staff member offered to help Mr. Hernandez Martinez get released  
4 from solitary confinement, but only if he would agree to begin working again.

5 86. Mr. Hernandez Gomez, Mr. Figueroa, Mr. Cardona Hernandez,  
6 Mr. Hernandez Martinez, and other class members were inexplicably transferred to new  
7 housing units after asserting their rights under the Labor Code. Class members view these  
8 transfers as GEO's efforts to impede their ability to advocate for themselves and others in  
9 the Work Program, and to punish them for doing the same.

10 87. Various GEO staff members stated, directly or indirectly, to Mr. Garcia,  
11 Mr. Prasad, Mr. Hernandez Gomez, and Mr. Figueroa that they were aware of this lawsuit.

12 88. On information and belief, these charges, discipline, refusals to provide  
13 assistance, housing transfers, and placements in solitary confinement are retaliatory in  
14 nature, designed to force workers to continue to work for GEO at subminimum wages or  
15 for no pay at all.

16 **F. GEO Uniformly Deprives Individuals Detained at the Facilities of Necessary**  
17 **Food, Water, Personal Hygiene, and Other Supplies, Forcing Detained**  
18 **Individuals to Work to Pay for Those Basic Supplies.**

19 89. GEO maintains a corporate policy and uniform practice of withholding  
20 sufficient food, water, hygiene products, and other necessities from those detained at the  
21 Facilities. As a result of this policy of deprivation, detained immigrants are forced either  
22 to purchase these daily necessities from the Facilities' commissaries or go without.

23 90. In 2021, detained people at Golden State Annex reported unlivable and  
24 unsanitary housing conditions, including cockroaches and flies in their food, spoiled milk,  
25 walls covered in mold, and broken toilets that spit water out when flushed.<sup>18</sup>

26 91. On or about September 1, 2022, detained people in Dorm C at Mesa Verde

27 <sup>18</sup> ACLU. *First Amendment Retaliation Against Individuals in Immigration Detention in*  
28 *California* (Aug. 26, 2021).  
[https://www.aclunc.org/sites/default/files/OCRCL%20complaint.08.26.21%20 0.pdf](https://www.aclunc.org/sites/default/files/OCRCL%20complaint.08.26.21%20%200.pdf).

1 observed brown, contaminated water flowing from their showers and faucets. The water  
2 contained pieces of debris. People housed in Dorm C notified staff that the water available  
3 to them appeared unsafe to drink and asked that bottled water be provided until the  
4 contamination was remedied. GEO staff did not provide bottled water for a full day, or  
5 until approximately September 2, 2022. For a few days after that, staff provided non-tap  
6 water to detained people. After a few days, however, detained people in Dorm C noticed  
7 that the taste of the water being provided from coolers for drinking was off and that there  
8 was debris inside the coolers. Water in coolers provided to staff and detained people on  
9 the exercise yard did not have the same taste and did not contain debris. The change in  
10 water quality after a few days led detained people in Dorm C to believe that GEO staff had  
11 resumed using tap water to fill the coolers, in addition to prepackaged and  
12 noncontaminated ice.

13       92. GEO staff later mocked the detained people in Dorm C and their complaints  
14 about the contaminated water. Recently, one staff member poured the contaminated water  
15 into a styrofoam cup, then animatedly saluted a video camera and drank the cup of water  
16 for the camera.

17       93. GEO also fails to provide adequate cleaning supplies to its detained  
18 immigrant workers. It provides insufficient amounts of soap, solvents, and other cleaning  
19 solutions and materials for the amount of space that needs to be cleaned. At times,  
20 detained workers must use their own personal hygiene supplies, such as shampoo, to  
21 perform their Work Program cleaning tasks. GEO also provides watered down solutions  
22 that do not have a sufficient concentration of active ingredients to clean effectively or  
23 efficiently.

24       94. GEO staff have told detained people that they can receive extra food from  
25 the commissary, but that these rewards are only available to people who do not participate  
26 in work stoppages.

27  
28

**G. GEO Does Not Staff Its Facilities Sufficiently to Perform Necessary Cleaning and Sanitation Work.**

95. GEO maintains a uniform practice of not hiring sufficient numbers of outside staff and detained workers to perform basic and necessary cleaning and sanitizing tasks.

96. At times, GEO has no outside staff employed to perform these basic and necessary duties. If detained immigrants choose not to clean shared living spaces, through the Work Program or on their own time without pay, they are forced to live in unsanitary conditions, and threatened with losing their jobs, yard time, and privileges, and with being subject to disciplinary action.

97. Even with detained workers performing these tasks according to a regular schedule, the Facilities remain dirty and unsanitary because GEO intentionally understaffs the Facilities to maximize its profits.

**H. GEO Has Not Provided Adequate COVID-19 Safety Prevention Measures at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.**

98. The COVID-19 pandemic added a layer of urgency to detained individuals' preexisting need to live in a clean and hygienic setting.

99. GEO failed to ensure COVID-19 safety prevention measures at Mesa Verde and further attempted to cover up its non-compliance with CDC COVID-19 guidelines. In a December 3, 2020 order, Judge Vince Chhabria of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California noted GEO officials' "abominable performance" of running Mesa Verde during the pandemic, including that officers "deliberately avoided testing detainees and staff for fear that the results would require them to take expensive and logistically challenging safety measures."<sup>19</sup> Other GEO officials "gave false testimony several times" during the proceedings, and the Mesa Verde facility administrator was "proven to exercise his discretion in a reckless and indifferent fashion" with respect to

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<sup>19</sup> *Zepeda Rivas v. Jennings*, 504 F. Supp. 3d 1060, 1064 (N.D. Cal. 2020).

1 detained immigrants' health and safety.<sup>20</sup> In sum, GEO officials "cannot be trusted on  
2 their own to provide reasonably safe conditions to detainees at Mesa Verde."<sup>21</sup>

3 100. Dozens of detained immigrants at Mesa Verde went on hunger strikes from  
4 April to July 2020 in part to protest the facility's hazardous living conditions and absence  
5 of COVID-19 safety prevention measures.<sup>22</sup> Officials claimed that detained strikers "were  
6 just not interested in eating their facility-provided meals." *Id.* Mesa Verde staff punished  
7 strikers for their protests.<sup>23</sup> Staff threatened to remove their access to the commissary and  
8 computer tablets they use to call, text, and otherwise communicate with loved ones.<sup>24</sup>

9 101. By maintaining these harsh conditions, punishing individuals for not  
10 working, failing to staff the Facilities at minimally adequate levels, and purposefully  
11 withholding basic necessities from those it detains, GEO ensures an available labor pool of  
12 detained immigrants who will work for only \$1 per day, or no pay at all, thus allowing it to  
13 continue operating the Facilities at a significant profit.

14 **I. GEO's Contracts with ICE Forbid GEO's Current Practices, But GEO**  
15 **Continues to Operate the Facilities Pursuant to Its Unlawful Policies.**

16 102. At each civil immigration facility operated by GEO, GEO is contractually  
17 required to comply with some version of ICE's 2011 PBNDS, as updated in 2016.

18 103. GEO's contracts with ICE to operate civil immigration detention facilities,  
19 including Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex, incorporate the PBNDS.

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21 <sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 1064, 1070.

22 <sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 1070.

23 <sup>22</sup> Sam Morgen. *Hunger Strike at Mesa Verde Ends After Four Days*, Bakersfield  
24 Californian (Jun. 9, 2020). [https://www.bakersfield.com/news/hunger-strike-at-mesa-verde-ends-after-four-days/article\\_490b6ee6-aa92-11ea-97a0-938736416877.html](https://www.bakersfield.com/news/hunger-strike-at-mesa-verde-ends-after-four-days/article_490b6ee6-aa92-11ea-97a0-938736416877.html).

25 <sup>23</sup> *Id.*

26 <sup>24</sup> Sam Morgen. *Detainees at Mesa Verde, Other Immigrant Detention Centers Allege*  
27 *Violation of First Amendment in Complaint*, Bakersfield Californian (Aug. 27, 2021).  
28 [https://www.bakersfield.com/news/detainees-at-mesa-verde-other-immigrant-detention-centers-allege-violation-of-first-amendment-in-complaint/article\\_0d31b924-0785-11ec-a9cb-9bceb111c4c3.html](https://www.bakersfield.com/news/detainees-at-mesa-verde-other-immigrant-detention-centers-allege-violation-of-first-amendment-in-complaint/article_0d31b924-0785-11ec-a9cb-9bceb111c4c3.html).

104. All applicable versions of the PBNDS require any labor performed by a detained immigrant to be voluntary: “Work assignments are voluntary; however all detainees are responsible for personal housekeeping.” PBNDS § 5.8.V.C.<sup>25</sup>

105. The Personal Housekeeping Requirement, PBNDS § 5.8.V.C.,<sup>26</sup> provides:

**C. Personal Housekeeping Required**

Work assignments are voluntary; however, all detainees are responsible for personal housekeeping.

*Detainees are required to maintain their immediate living areas in a neat and orderly manner by:*

- 1. making their bunk beds daily;*
- 2. stacking loose papers;*
- 3. keeping the floor free of debris and dividers free of clutter; and*
- 4. refraining from hanging/draping clothing, pictures, keepsakes, or other objects from beds, overhead lighting fixtures or other furniture.*

106. Outside of the four personal housekeeping tasks enumerated in PBNDS § 5.8.V.C, GEO cannot force or compel individuals in immigration detention to work.

107. In violation of the PBNDS, its contracts with ICE, and the California and federal forced labor statutes, GEO promulgates and enforces corporate policies known as Housing Unit Sanitation Policies (“HUSPs”) at nearly all of its civil immigration detention facilities, including Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

108. GEO’s HUSPs require detained immigrants to perform a wide range of uncompensated work for the company’s enrichment.

109. Under the HUSPs, detained immigrants are forced to perform uncompensated labor, such as cleaning and maintaining areas of GEO facilities outside the scope of the Personal Housekeeping Requirement, PBNDS § 5.8.V.C. For instance, the

<sup>25</sup> See also PBNDS § 5.8.II.2 (“Detainees shall be able to volunteer for work assignments but otherwise shall not be required to work, except to do personal housekeeping.”)

<sup>26</sup> Available at <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/detention-standards/2011/5-8.pdf> (last visited Dec. 22, 2022).

1 HUSPs require detained immigrants to clean and sanitize walls, bathrooms, showers,  
2 toilets, microwaves, furniture, windows and floors—work well outside the four personal  
3 housekeeping tasks enumerated in PBNDS § 5.8.V.C.

4 110. Detained immigrants are not paid to perform labor under the HUSPs.

5 111. At Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex, GEO obtains compliance with its  
6 HUSPs by threatening detained immigrants with disciplinary write-ups and solitary  
7 confinement; deprivation of legally required services such as recreation, law library, and  
8 telephone time; understaffing its facilities; depriving detained individuals of food, water,  
9 basic hygiene, and other supplies; and abuse of legal process, including reporting  
10 misbehavior to ICE or to the immigration court and the threat of criminal prosecution.

11 112. Detained immigrants have no meaningful choice but to comply with a  
12 demand from a GEO official to perform free labor.

13 113. Detained immigrants are notified in the Detainee Handbooks when they enter  
14 the Facilities of GEO's requirement that they must perform uncompensated, non-personal  
15 cleaning and maintenance work, and that the consequence of refusal can be disciplinary  
16 action, including solitary confinement.

17 114. GEO's facility-specific Detainee Handbooks are intended to leave detained  
18 immigrants with the false impression that the company can compel them to perform work  
19 outside the four personal housekeeping tasks set forth in Section 5.8.V.C of the PBNDS.

20 115. No clause in GEO's contracts with ICE or any rule or standard incorporated  
21 by reference therein permits GEO to compel or force detained individuals to work for free  
22 at Mesa Verde or Golden State Annex.

23 116. GEO's contracts with ICE incorporating the PBNDS expressly prohibit the  
24 company from forcing, coercing, or mandating detained individuals to complete work  
25 assignments that fall outside the scope of the personal housekeeping requirement,  
26 PBNDS § 5.8.V.C.

27 117. The PBNDS requires detained workers in the Work Program “to work  
28 according to a schedule” and prohibits “work in excess of 8 hours daily and 40 hours



1 weekly.” PBNDS § 5.8.H.

2 118. As a federal contractor, GEO is also prohibited by Executive Order, the  
3 Federal Acquisition Regulations, and Homeland Security Acquisition Regulations from  
4 using forced labor in the performance of its contracts with ICE.

5 119. GEO must promptly report allegations of forced labor made against the  
6 corporation to the federal government, regardless of whether it contests those allegations.

7 120. On information and belief, GEO has not complied with the requirement that  
8 it promptly report allegations of forced labor made by Plaintiffs in this action to the federal  
9 government.

10 121. By carrying out a scheme requiring detained immigrants to perform  
11 uncompensated janitorial and maintenance work pursuant to corporate HUSPs, GEO  
12 violates the federal and California forced labor statutes.<sup>27</sup>

13 **J. At All Relevant Times, GEO Acted with Malice, Oppression, and Fraud by**  
14 **Forcing Detained Workers to Work and Intentionally and Illegally Reaping**  
**the Benefits of Detained Workers’ Labor.**

15 122. GEO’s despicable conduct in depriving detained workers of food, water, and  
16 essential supplies, and punishing and threatening to punish detained workers for asserting  
17 their rights to a minimum wage and to be free from forced labor evidences its malicious  
18 and oppressive conduct in promulgating and operating the Work Program.<sup>28</sup> GEO engaged  
19 in this malicious and oppressive conduct with a willful and conscious disregard of detained  
20 individuals’ rights and safety, and in so doing subjected them to cruel and unjust hardship  
21 in disregard of their rights.

22 123. In its Detainee Handbooks and through GEO staff’s oral and other  
23 representations GEO fraudulently and intentionally misrepresented to detained people that  
24 they are and were required to perform work outside the requirements of the PBNDS and  
25 pursuant to the HUSPs, and that GEO could lawfully force them to perform such work  
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27 <sup>27</sup> See 18 U.S.C. § 1589; Cal. Civ. Code § 52.5.

28 <sup>28</sup> See Cal. Civ. Code § 3294(a)-(c).

1 under threat of and actual discipline and other sanctions. GEO knew it could not lawfully  
2 require detained individuals to perform this work, but it intentionally and unlawfully  
3 forced detained individuals to work. In doing so, GEO intended to reap the economic  
4 benefit of this forced and undercompensated labor; its business model relies on these  
5 practices.

6 **K. Plaintiff Jose Ruben Hernandez Gomez Was Forced to Work for Little or No**  
7 **Pay.**

8 124. Mr. Hernandez Gomez is a citizen of Mexico and a lawful permanent  
9 resident of the United States since he was 8 years old. He previously lived in Lodi,  
10 California.

11 125. Mr. Hernandez Gomez was detained at Golden State Annex from November  
12 26, 2021 through January 4, 2022. He has been detained at Mesa Verde since January 4,  
13 2022.

14 126. Mr. Hernandez Gomez performed work for GEO at both the Mesa Verde and  
15 Golden State Annex facilities and was not paid California's minimum wage for that work.  
16 At times he was not paid at all for his work.

17 127. When Mr. Hernandez Gomez was housed at Golden State Annex, between  
18 November 26, 2021 and January 4, 2022, he worked in the quarantine section. Staff did  
19 not clean the quarantine section at all, and no individuals were assigned to the Work  
20 Program in the quarantine section. The detained people housed there organized their own  
21 cleaning schedules that they followed so that they did not have to live in filth. Among  
22 other things, the detained people in the quarantine section cleaned bathrooms and eating  
23 areas.

24 128. At Mesa Verde, Mr. Hernandez Gomez worked as a porter in Dorm A for  
25 about one month, between January and February 2022. He cleaned restrooms, hallways,  
26 and dayrooms. He used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO.  
27 Mr. Hernandez Gomez worked Monday through Friday from approximately 10:30 am until  
28 11:20 am. During that hour, Mr. Hernandez Gomez swept and mopped floors, and cleaned

1 showers and toilets. In February 2022, Mr. Hernandez Gomez left Dorm A to live in  
2 Dorm C. When he returned to Dorm A in March 2022 he again worked as a porter. His  
3 work week after March 2022 ran from Tuesday through Saturday, and his hours varied, but  
4 generally started at 8 am and ended sometime between 9 am and 12 pm. Again, he swept  
5 and mopped floors, and cleaned showers and toilets. He also worked on his days off to  
6 prevent the dorm from becoming filthy.

7 129. In return for his labor in the Work Program at Mesa Verde, GEO paid  
8 Mr. Hernandez \$1 per day. GEO credited these wages to Mr. Hernandez Gomez's  
9 commissary account.

10 130. Mr. Hernandez Gomez used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by  
11 GEO, and is supervised by GEO employees.

12 131. If Mr. Hernandez Gomez did not clean the bathrooms, eating areas, and other  
13 shared spaces, he would be forced to live in filth.

14 132. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Hernandez Gomez would not have worked  
15 for \$1 per day.

16 133. On June 29, 2022, Mr. Hernandez Gomez's dorm joined a work stoppage  
17 taking place at Mesa Verde that had already been ongoing in a different dorm since May 5,  
18 2022. The work stoppage is an effort to protest wages, working conditions, and worker  
19 treatment. Mr. Hernandez Gomez and 16 other individuals in his dorm signed a note  
20 informing GEO in writing of the work stoppage.

21 134. GEO retained the value of Mr. Hernandez Gomez's labor by realizing this  
22 value as corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living  
23 conditions for detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

24 **L. Plaintiff Salesh Prasad Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

25 135. Mr. Prasad is citizen of Fiji and has been a permanent resident of the United  
26 States since he was 6 years old. He is seeking humanitarian relief in the United States  
27 under the Convention Against Torture.

28 136. Mr. Prasad was detained at Golden State Annex from August 19, 2021

1 through December 6, 2022. He was housed in Dorms B1, B2, B3, A2, and A4, along with  
2 the Special Management Unit (SMU), GEO's solitary confinement unit at Golden State  
3 Annex.

4 137. Between approximately September 9 or 10, 2021 and January 14, 2022, and  
5 from June 6, 2022 to June 21, 2022, Mr. Prasad was employed by GEO as a porter.

6 138. Mr. Prasad performed work for GEO at Golden State Annex and was not  
7 paid California's minimum wage for that work. At times he was not paid at all for his  
8 work.

9 139. Mr. Prasad worked as a porter in the Work Program beginning in September  
10 2021. As a porter, Mr. Prasad cleaned the showers, toilets, and sinks at Golden State  
11 Annex. He cleaned the floors and picked up trash. He also cleaned the dayroom,  
12 windows, and other parts of the bathroom when other detained workers did not perform  
13 these duties. Mr. Prasad was scheduled to work the morning shift, Monday through  
14 Friday.

15 140. Mr. Prasad used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO, and was  
16 supervised by GEO employees.

17 141. Between September 2021 and January 2022, Mr. Prasad was paid \$1 per day  
18 for his 8-hour shift as a porter.

19 142. Starting in September 2021, however, Mr. Prasad had to work for free on his  
20 days off and outside his regular work schedule because there were not enough workers to  
21 perform all necessary cleaning tasks.

22 143. Starting in January 2022, no porters at all were employed to work in Dorm  
23 B1. Mr. Prasad was unassigned from his porter position as well. As a result, Mr. Prasad  
24 had to mop the whole dorm—the television room, dayroom, bed area, and phone area—but  
25 was not paid, even \$1 per day, for doing so.

26 144. In February 2022, when Mr. Prasad asked the B Dorm caseworker whether  
27 GEO could hire workers to clean the dorm, the caseworker deferred the question to the  
28 next week. The following week, when Mr. Prasad asked again, the caseworker informed

1 Mr. Prasad that GEO would not be hiring more staff; they would be cutting positions.  
2 When Mr. Prasad asked the caseworker whether GEO wanted detained individuals to work  
3 for free, the caseworker responded, “I don’t know, I just work here.”

4 145. Mr. Prasad and one other detained person worked 7 days per week because  
5 no other workers were available to clean in Dorm B1.

6 146. On April 22, 2022, Mr. Prasad was moved to Dorm B2. Again, Mr. Prasad  
7 had to work for free because there were no workers to perform necessary cleaning tasks.  
8 No porters at all were employed to work in Dorm B2. As a result, Mr. Prasad had to mop  
9 the whole dorm—the television room, dayroom, bed area, phone area, and bathrooms.

10 147. Between January 2022 and June 6, 2022, GEO was able to compel  
11 Mr. Prasad to work for free because no one else was available or willing to do necessary  
12 sanitation and cleaning.

13 148. Beginning on June 6, 2022, Mr. Prasad was again hired as a porter. He was  
14 paid \$1 per day. GEO credited these wages to Mr. Prasad’s commissary account.

15 149. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Prasad would not have worked for \$1 per  
16 day or nothing at all.

17 150. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Prasad would not have worked 7 days per  
18 week.

19 151. GEO retained the value of Mr. Prasad’s labor by realizing this value as  
20 corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions for  
21 detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

22 **M. Plaintiff Guillermo Medina Reyes Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

23 152. Mr. Medina Reyes is a citizen of Mexico. He is seeking humanitarian relief  
24 in the United States pursuant to the Convention Against Torture.

25 153. Mr. Medina Reyes has been detained at Golden State Annex since December  
26 9, 2021.

27 154. Mr. Medina Reyes has performed work for GEO at Golden State Annex  
28 between January and March 2022, when he signed a Work Program contract to perform

1 porter duties in Dorm A4. Later in March he signed a new Work Program contract to  
2 perform the same job duties as a porter in Dorm A4. In May 2022, he signed a new Work  
3 Program contract for a barber position.

4 155. Mr. Medina Reyes asked GEO's case manager about becoming a porter  
5 because he noticed the dorms were not clean and were unsanitary. Only two or three  
6 individuals were employed to clean the dorms.

7 156. Mr. Medina Reyes has never been paid California minimum wage for the  
8 work he has performed.

9 157. As a porter, Mr. Medina Reyes mopped and swept the entire dorm, including  
10 the dayroom, television room, and in between bunks. After Mr. Medina Reyes began  
11 working as a porter, staff began adding duties to his job because there were not enough  
12 porters to complete necessary tasks. At first Mr. Medina Reyes was just sweeping and  
13 mopping, but later he became responsible for wiping tables and telephones. At times he  
14 had to clean bathrooms, including the toilets, sinks, floors, walls, mirrors, and showers.

15 158. He used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO, and he was  
16 supervised by GEO employees.

17 159. Mr. Medina Reyes has been paid \$1 per day for his labor as a porter and a  
18 barber. GEO credits these wages to Mr. Medina Reyes's commissary account.

19 160. As a porter, Mr. Medina Reyes performed other janitorial and maintenance  
20 work for GEO.

21 161. When Mr. Medina Reyes was housed in B Dorm for approximately 3 to 4  
22 weeks in December 2021, no paid porters were assigned to clean and maintain the dorm.  
23 GEO staff in B Dorm told residents that no outside staff or detained workers would clean  
24 the dorm, meaning that they have to do it. As a result, the detained individuals in B Dorm  
25 organized and performed all cleaning duties. GEO staff provided cleaning supplies to the  
26 workers in B Dorm.

27 162. While Mr. Medina Reyes was housed in B Dorm he cleaned the bathroom  
28 and showers on a daily basis. He was not compensated for this work. Mr. Medina Reyes

1 did not feel like he had a choice not to clean because if he and other detained individuals  
2 did not perform this work, no one would and their living spaces would become dirty and  
3 unsanitary.

4 163. As a barber, Mr. Medina Reyes is responsible for providing haircuts to all  
5 individuals in his dorm. He conducts his work in a room assigned by GEO, during specific  
6 daily work hours assigned by GEO. GEO provides the clippers, trimmers, and barbicide  
7 he uses for his work.

8 164. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Medina Reyes would not work for \$1 per  
9 day or no money at all.

10 165. GEO retained the value of Mr. Medina Reyes's labor by realizing this value  
11 as corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions  
12 for detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

13 **N. Plaintiff Edgar Sanchez Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

14 166. Mr. Sanchez is a citizen of Mexico and has lived in California since he was 1  
15 year-old. He has lawful status pursuant to the Convention Against Torture and currently  
16 lives and works in Whittier, California.

17 167. Mr. Sanchez was detained at Golden State Annex between April 1, 2021 and  
18 February 24, 2022.

19 168. Mr. Sanchez performed work for GEO at Golden State Annex starting in  
20 June 2021, when he signed a Work Program contract to perform porter duties. He worked  
21 as a porter for approximately 6 months.

22 169. He was not paid the California minimum wage for the work he performed.

23 170. As a porter, Mr. Sanchez mopped and swept his dorm. He also cleaned and  
24 sanitized surfaces in the dorm.

25 171. Mr. Sanchez used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO, and  
26 was supervised by GEO employees.

27 172. Mr. Sanchez was paid \$1 per day for his labor as a porter. GEO credited  
28 these wages to Mr. Sanchez's commissary account.



1 173. Mr. Sanchez was compelled to work as a porter. Officers at Golden State  
2 Annex would tell him and other detained individuals that they were required to work, and  
3 that it was mandatory to do so.

4 174. Officers would also tell detained individuals that they would not be  
5 permitted to go to yard if they did not work. If Mr. Sanchez did not perform tasks as  
6 ordered by GEO staff, officers stopped recreation time for his entire dorm and/or denied  
7 the entire dorm legal library and/or chow access.

8 175. Mr. Sanchez would work so that the people in his dorm would not lose  
9 access to these activities.

10 176. Mr. Sanchez performed his porter duties even on days he was not scheduled  
11 to work to keep the dorm clean and sanitary in hopes of preventing or reducing disease  
12 among the population.

13 177. Officers threatened Mr. Sanchez with discipline if he did not work. They  
14 told Mr. Sanchez that if they disciplined him, that would interfere with his immigration  
15 case and his ability to seek relief.

16 178. Mr. Sanchez performed work under threat of harm to himself and his fellow  
17 detained immigrants and abuse of the legal process.

18 179. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Sanchez would not have worked for \$1 per  
19 day or nothing at all.

20 180. GEO retained the value of Mr. Sanchez's labor by realizing this value as  
21 corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions for  
22 detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

23 **O. Plaintiff Adan Castillo Merino Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

24 181. Mr. Castillo Merino is a citizen of Mexico and has lived in Southern  
25 California since he was 8 years old. He was detained at Golden State Annex during the  
26 pendency of his immigration case before the Immigration Court, the Board of Immigration  
27 Appeals and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals from November 6, 2020 until  
28 September 8, 2022.

1           182. Mr. Castillo Merino performed work for GEO at Golden State Annex  
2 beginning in November or December 2020. Starting in November or December 2020 and  
3 through May 2021, Mr. Castillo Merino was assigned to work as a porter in the Work  
4 Program. His duties included sweeping, mopping, and cleaning the dorm restrooms,  
5 furniture, windows, and doors.

6           183. In May 2021, Mr. Castillo Merino was assigned to work as a painter in the  
7 Work Program for one week. He and others were responsible for painting the dorms. As a  
8 member of the paint crew, Mr. Castillo Merino was promised \$1 per day in pay. He was  
9 told that within one week of his employment, the painters would be able to meet with the  
10 warden to see if they could earn a small amount of additional pay. Instead of raising the  
11 painters' pay, the GEO staff fired everyone on the paint crew. Staff then hired other  
12 workers to constitute a new paint crew.

13           184. Starting in May 2021, Mr. Castillo Merino was once again assigned to work  
14 as a porter in the Work Program. He was assigned to work the afternoon shift, from 2 pm  
15 to 10 pm. His responsibilities were similar to those he performed in his first porter  
16 position. His duties included sweeping, mopping, and cleaning the dorm restrooms,  
17 furniture, windows, and doors.

18           185. Mr. Castillo Merino was never paid California minimum wage for the work  
19 he performed.

20           186. Mr. Castillo Merino used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO  
21 and was supervised by GEO employees.

22           187. Mr. Castillo Merino was paid \$1 per day for his labor as a porter and a  
23 painter. GEO credited these wages to Mr. Castillo Merino's commissary account.

24           188. Mr. Castillo Merino worked on his putative days off and during hours when  
25 he was not scheduled because GEO had not hired sufficient outside staff and detained  
26 workers to perform necessary cleaning and sanitation tasks.

27           189. Mr. Castillo Merino does not feel like he had a choice not to clean because if  
28 he and other detained immigrants did not perform under- and uncompensated work, no one

1 would. Their living spaces would have become dirty and unsanitary. When detained  
2 workers do not clean the dorms, mold grows in the showers, dust collects, and the toilets  
3 become dirty because GEO staff do not clean them properly.

4 190. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Castillo Merino would not have worked  
5 for \$1 per day or no money at all.

6 191. On June 6, 2022, Mr. Castillo Merino and other workers on his dorm began a  
7 labor stoppage in response to conditions, including an increase in commissary fees,  
8 inadequate medical care, inadequate amounts of food, and excessive telephone, video call,  
9 and texting fees that make it difficult for detained individuals to keep in contact with their  
10 loved ones.

11 192. GEO retained the value of Mr. Castillo Merino's labor by realizing this value  
12 as corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions  
13 for detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

14 **P. Plaintiff Ivan Oliva Sierra Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

15 193. Mr. Oliva Sierra is a citizen of Mexico and has lived in Southern California  
16 since he was approximately 6 years old. He was detained at Golden State Annex from  
17 January 12, 2021 until on or about June 13, 2022. Although an Immigration Judge  
18 ultimately found on April 27, 2022 that Mr. Oliva Sierra warrants legal status in the United  
19 States under the Convention Against Torture, ICE refused to release him from detention  
20 for nearly two additional months.

21 194. Mr. Oliva Sierra currently resides in Compton, California.

22 195. Mr. Oliva Sierra worked in several positions at Golden State Annex.

23 196. At various times between April 2021 and May 2022, Mr. Oliva Sierra  
24 worked as porter, a barber, and an ADA assistant helping a person with disabilities with  
25 activities of daily living. In both the porter and ADA assistant assignments, Mr. Oliva  
26 Sierra performed work outside his scheduled hours because GEO did not provide for  
27 enough free or detained staff to perform these functions.

28 197. Mr. Oliva Sierra was never paid California minimum wage for the work he

1 performed.

2 198. Mr. Oliva Sierra used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO,  
3 and is supervised by GEO employees.

4 199. When GEO paid Mr. Oliva Sierra for his work, GEO paid just \$1 per day.

5 200. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Oliva Sierra would not have worked for \$1  
6 per day or no money at all.

7 201. GEO retained the value of Mr. Oliva Sierra's labor by realizing this value as  
8 corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions for  
9 detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

10 **Q. Plaintiff Fidel Garcia Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

11 202. Mr. Garcia is a citizen of Mexico and has lived in the United States since he  
12 was approximately 5 years old. He has been detained at Golden State Annex during the  
13 pendency of his immigration case before the Immigration Court and the Board of  
14 Immigration Appeals.

15 203. Mr. Garcia has been detained at Golden State Annex since July 2021.  
16 Initially he was housed in B Dorm, but then was moved to the A1 Dorm after  
17 approximately two weeks.

18 204. Mr. Garcia has worked as a porter in the Work Program since approximately  
19 July 16, 2021. As a porter, he cleans the bathrooms, including sweeping the floors, taking  
20 out the trash, and cleaning the toilets and showers.

21 205. Mr. Garcia is assigned to work as a porter 5 days per week for 8 hours per  
22 day, but actually works 7 days a week because there are not enough porters to cover all  
23 shifts and there are not enough assigned workers to complete all the necessary work.

24 206. When Mr. Garcia works on his days off, he does not get paid for his work.  
25 Staff do not record his extra shifts, so he does not get paid for them.

26 207. Mr. Garcia has never been paid California minimum wage for the work he  
27 has performed.

28 208. Mr. Garcia has been paid \$1 per day for his labor. GEO credits these wages

1 to Mr. Garcia's commissary account. At times Mr. Garcia has been paid nothing at all.

2 209. Mr. Garcia uses cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO, and is  
3 supervised by GEO employees.

4 210. Mr. Garcia feels like he has not had a choice not to work because if he and  
5 other detained people do not perform this uncompensated yet necessary work, no one will.

6 211. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Garcia would not work for \$1 per day or  
7 no money at all.

8 212. On June 6, 2022, Mr. Garcia and other workers on his dorm began a labor  
9 stoppage to protest GEO's exploitation of them, including increases of commissary fees at  
10 Golden State Annex.

11 213. GEO retained the value of Mr. Garcia's labor by realizing this value as  
12 corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions for  
13 detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

14 **R. Plaintiff Isaac Cardona Hernandez Was Forced to Work for Little or No Pay.**

15 214. Mr. Cardona Hernandez is a citizen of Guatemala. He is currently detained  
16 at Mesa Verde during the pendency of his immigration case before the Ninth Circuit Court  
17 of Appeals.

18 215. Mr. Cardona Hernandez was detained at Golden State Annex starting July 6,  
19 2021. He was housed in A Dorm. In early October 2021, Mr. Cardona Hernandez was  
20 transferred to Mesa Verde. He spent his first two weeks at Mesa Verde in A Dorm, and  
21 then moved to C Dorm, where he resided until June 9, 2022. Between June 9 and July 7,  
22 2022, Mr. Cardona Hernandez was housed in segregation.

23 216. At both Facilities, Mr. Cardona Hernandez worked as a porter in the Work  
24 Program. He began working in the Work Program at Golden State Annex in early July  
25 2021, and at Mesa Verde about a week after being transferred there in early October 2021.

26 217. Mr. Cardona Hernandez began cleaning at Mesa Verde, without pay, shortly  
27 after his arrival and before he was hired into the Work Program.

28 218. To be hired as a porter at both Facilities, Mr. Cardona Hernandez signed

1 applications and then participated in short interviews. During the interview at Mesa  
2 Verde, staff asked Mr. Cardona Hernandez what work he wanted to perform and whether  
3 he wanted to work a morning or afternoon shift. Mesa Verde staff asked Mr. Cardona  
4 Hernandez questions from a list during his interview for the Work Program.

5 219. During the interview at Golden State Annex, staff discussed safety practices  
6 with Mr. Cardona Hernandez, including how to wear goggles and use gloves properly.

7 220. As a porter, Mr. Cardona Hernandez cleaned the bathrooms completely,  
8 including sweeping the floors and cleaning the toilets and showers. At times, when  
9 needed, Mr. Cardona Hernandez has cleaned other areas of the Facilities as well.

10 221. Mr. Cardona Hernandez was assigned to work one 8-hour shift per day, five  
11 days per week. He was assigned to work Monday through Friday. Due to inadequate  
12 staffing, however, Mr. Cardona Hernandez typically worked six days per week and at  
13 times he would cover both the morning and afternoon shifts in a single day. He was not  
14 paid for this additional work. Mr. Cardona Hernandez understood that if he did not  
15 perform the work, there were not enough staff and detained workers to clean.

16 222. In approximately January 2022, the workers in Mr. Cardona Hernandez's  
17 dorm initiated a work stoppage because Mesa Verde cut the number of workers employed  
18 in the dorm from an average of 8 workers to no more than 6 workers. In early May 2022,  
19 GEO decided to cut the number of workers further, so that fewer than 6 workers were  
20 hired to clean the dorm.

21 223. When the work stoppage began, GEO hired two outside staff members to  
22 clean the dorm where Mr. Cardona Hernandez lives. The outside staff do not clean the  
23 dorms well, so Mr. Cardona Hernandez continues to clean.

24 224. In retaliation for the work stoppage, GEO removed popcorn and soda as  
25 items that detained workers could purchase from the commissary.

26 225. On May 5, 2022, Mr. Cardona Hernandez filed a grievance asking GEO to  
27 clean the living areas better. In response to his grievance, GEO stated if Mr. Cardona  
28 Hernandez wanted to his living space to be cleaner, he should clean it himself.

1 Mr. Cardona Hernandez believes he will have to start cleaning common dorm areas again  
2 because he does not want to live in filth.

3 226. On June 9, 2022, when Mr. Cardona Hernandez was still participating in the  
4 work stoppage, GEO staff placed him in segregation. He believes he was placed in  
5 segregation in retaliation for joining the work stoppage.

6 227. After being placed in segregation, Mr. Cardona Hernandez met two other  
7 people who also participated in work stoppages in other dorms and who were also moved  
8 out of their dorms and placed in segregation. Mr. Cardona Hernandez perceives these  
9 retaliatory moves as ways to separate the those participating in the work stoppages and  
10 break up the work stoppages.

11 228. Mr. Cardona Hernandez has never been paid California minimum wage for  
12 the work he has performed.

13 229. Mr. Cardona Hernandez has been paid \$1 per day for his labor. GEO credits  
14 these wages to Mr. Cardona Hernandez's commissary account. At times Mr. Cardona  
15 Hernandez has been paid nothing at all.

16 230. Mr. Cardona Hernandez uses cleaning supplies and equipment provided by  
17 GEO, and is supervised by GEO employees.

18 231. Mr. Cardona Hernandez feels like he does not have a choice not to work  
19 because if he and other detained people do not perform this uncompensated yet necessary  
20 work, no one will.

21 232. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Cardona Hernandez would not work for \$1  
22 per day or no money at all.

23 233. GEO retained the value of Mr. Cardona Hernandez's labor by realizing this  
24 value as corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living  
25 conditions for detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

26 **S. Plaintiff Pedro Jesus Figueroa Padilla Was Forced to Work for Little or No**  
27 **Pay.**

28 234. Mr. Figueroa is a citizen of Mexico. He has been detained at Golden State



1 Annex and Mesa Verde during the pendency of his immigration proceedings.

2 235. Mr. Figueroa was detained at Golden State Annex from October 29, 2021  
3 through November 22, 2021, in Dorm B1. On November 22, 2021, he was transferred to  
4 Mesa Verde, where he lived in A Dorm for approximately one month. He was transferred  
5 to D Dorm after his first month on A Dorm, and then transferred back to A Dorm on  
6 February 14, 2022.

7 236. When Mr. Figueroa was at Golden State Annex, he would clean his dorm  
8 even though he had not been hired into the Work Program. Mr. Figueroa felt he had no  
9 choice but to clean because no one was hired into the Work Program there. While at  
10 Golden State Annex, Mr. Figueroa swept and mopped the entire dorm. He shared these  
11 unofficial job duties with the other people in the dorm.

12 237. Mr. Figueroa signed a Work Program contract to work as a porter at Mesa  
13 Verde in approximately December 2021, but was taken off the list due to medical issues.  
14 In approximately January 2022, when he was medically cleared to work again, he signed a  
15 new contract to work as a porter. He worked as a porter at Mesa Verde from  
16 approximately February 2022 until June 28, 2022.

17 238. He was assigned to an 8-hour shift, 5 days per week.

18 239. His job duties as dorm porter included sweeping and mopping the dorm,  
19 cleaning the restrooms, and picking up trash, among other things. On June 28, 2022,  
20 Mr. Figueroa's dorm joined the work stoppage taking place at Mesa Verde. Mr. Figueroa  
21 and 16 other individuals in his dorm signed a note informing GEO in writing of the work  
22 stoppage.

23 240. On June 29, 2022, Mr. Figueroa witnessed another individual who signed the  
24 note being taken out of the dorm and placed in segregation. In the morning on June 30,  
25 2022, Mr. Figueroa was approached by a lieutenant on the yard who told him he would be  
26 taken to medical for a segregation screening. Mr. Figueroa asked the reason and was told  
27 it was for inciting a group demonstration. Later that day, Mr. Figueroa received a paper  
28 stating the charge: engaging in or inciting a group demonstration and conduct that disrupts

1 the operation of the facility. On July 1, 2022, Mr. Figueroa received copies of incident  
2 reports stating the charges. He believes that he and his dorm-mate were placed in  
3 segregation as retaliation for joining the work stoppage.

4 241. Mr. Figueroa has never been paid the California minimum wage for the work  
5 he has performed.

6 242. Mr. Figueroa has been paid \$1 per day for his labor. GEO credits these  
7 wages to Mr. Figueroa's commissary account. At times Mr. Figueroa is paid nothing at  
8 all.

9 243. Mr. Figueroa used cleaning supplies and equipment provided by GEO, and  
10 was supervised by GEO employees.

11 244. Mr. Figueroa feels he has had no choice but to work because if he and other  
12 detained people do not perform this necessary work, no one will, and he could be issued a  
13 disciplinary write-up.

14 245. If given a meaningful choice, Mr. Figueroa would not work for \$1 per day or  
15 no money at all.

16 246. GEO retained the value of Mr. Figueroa's labor by realizing this value as  
17 corporate profits, rather than using it to provide safer, more humane living conditions for  
18 detained people at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex.

### 19 **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

20 247. Plaintiffs bring this lawsuit as a class action on behalf of themselves and all  
21 others similarly situated under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 23(a), 23(b)(2)  
22 and 23(b)(3). This action satisfies the numerosity, commonality, typicality, adequacy,  
23 predominance, and superiority requirements of those provisions.

#### 24 **A. Class Definitions**

25 248. **The California Wage and Hour Class.** For Plaintiffs' claims arising under  
26 the California Labor Code and Industrial Wage Commission ("IWC") Wage Orders, the  
27 California Unfair Competition Law, and the common law of unjust enrichment. Plaintiffs  
28 seek to certify the following class: All civilly detained immigrants who (i) were detained

1 at the Facilities any time between July 13, 2019 and the date of final judgment in this  
 2 matter, and either (ii) participated in the Work Program at any point during their detention,  
 3 or (iii) performed work for no compensation as a result of GEO's policy not to hire  
 4 sufficient outside staff and detained workers to keep the Facilities clean and sanitary, and  
 5 to deprive detained people of necessary food, water, and other supplies.

6       249. **The California Forced Labor Class.** For Plaintiffs' claim for forced labor  
 7 arising under the California Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Plaintiffs seek to certify  
 8 the following class: All civil immigration detained individuals who (i) were detained at  
 9 Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex any time between July 13, 2015 and the date of final  
 10 judgment in this matter, and (ii) performed janitorial, maintenance, or other work at the  
 11 Facilities above and beyond the four personal housekeeping tasks enumerated in  
 12 PBNDS § 5.8.V.C ("California Forced Labor Class").

13       250. **The Federal Forced Labor Class.** For Plaintiffs' claim for forced labor  
 14 arising under the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, Plaintiffs seek to certify the  
 15 following class: All civilly detained immigrants who (i) were detained at Mesa Verde and  
 16 Golden State Annex any time between July 13, 2015 and the date of final judgment in this  
 17 matter, and (ii) participated in the Work Program or (iii) performed work without  
 18 compensation at any point during their detention ("Federal Forced Labor Class").

19       251. Excluded from each class definition are the defendants, their officers,  
 20 directors, management, subsidiaries, and affiliates, and all federal governmental entities.  
 21 Plaintiffs reserve the right to revise the class definitions based upon information learned  
 22 through discovery.

## 23 **B. Class Certification Requirements Under Rule 23**

24       252. **Numerosity: Rule 23(a)(1).** Each class is so numerous that joinder of all  
 25 members is impracticable. Plaintiffs do not know the exact size of the classes, since that  
 26 information is within the control of GEO. Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex can house  
 27 up to 1,100 individuals at any one time. Accordingly, Plaintiffs allege that the number of  
 28 class members for each class is numbered in the thousands. Membership in each class is

1 readily ascertainable from GEO's detention and employment records.

2       253. **Commonality and Predominance: Rules 23(a)(2) and 23(b)(3).** There are  
3 numerous questions of law or fact common to each class, and those issues predominate  
4 over any question affecting only individual class members.

5       254. With respect to the California Wage and Hour Class, the common legal and  
6 factual issues include the following:

7               (a) Whether GEO is an "employer" and the detained immigrant workers  
8 are "employees" under the California Minimum Wage Law;

9               (b) Whether Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class are entitled to  
10 the protections of the California Wage Orders;

11              (c) Whether Plaintiffs and California and Hour Wage Class performed  
12 compensable work;

13              (d) Whether Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class were paid \$1  
14 per day for their labor;

15              (e) Whether GEO was unjustly enriched by paying subminimum wages to  
16 its detained immigrant workers;

17              (f) Whether GEO engaged in conduct that violated California law—  
18 including California Minimum Wage Law, the California Labor Code, associated  
19 California Wage Orders, and the California Unfair Competition Law;

20              (g) Whether Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class are entitled to  
21 equitable relief, including injunctive and declaratory relief; and

22              (h) Whether Plaintiffs and California Wage Class are entitled to damages,  
23 penalties, and other monetary relief and, if so, in what amount.

24       255. With respect to the California and Federal Forced Labor Classes, common  
25 legal and factual issues include the following:

26              (a) Whether GEO unlawfully forces, coerces, or otherwise compels  
27 civilly detained immigrants at the Facilities to work for no compensation;

28              (b) Whether GEO obtains detained immigrant labor through threats of

1 withholding ICE-mandated yard and recreation time, library access, disciplinary  
2 infractions, and/or abuse of the legal process;

3 (c) Whether GEO withholds basic living necessities from immigrants  
4 detained at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex;

5 (d) Whether GEO systematically understaffs and under-resources the  
6 Facilities such that detained people must work so as not to be forced to live in intolerably  
7 filthy and unsanitary conditions;

8 (e) Whether GEO disciplines detained workers for failing to perform  
9 work, both pursuant to the Work Program and to comply with the HUSPs, including by  
10 placing them in solitary confinement, subjecting them to disciplinary transfers, and  
11 initiating criminal proceedings;

12 (f) Whether GEO staff threaten to or actually abuse the legal process by  
13 reporting unlawful disciplinary charges to immigration officials;

14 (g) Whether GEO's HUSPs require detained immigrants to perform  
15 janitorial, maintenance, or other work above and beyond the four personal housekeeping  
16 tasks enumerated in the ICE PBNDS;

17 (h) Whether a reasonable person would provide labor to GEO under the  
18 circumstances present here;

19 (i) Whether GEO's conduct violates the California and federal  
20 Trafficking Victims Protection Act;

21 (j) Whether Plaintiffs and the California and Federal Forced Labor  
22 Classes are entitled to equitable relief, including injunctive and declaratory relief; and

23 (k) Whether Plaintiffs and the California and Federal Forced Labor  
24 Classes are entitled to damages and other monetary relief and, if so, in what amount.

25 256. **Typicality: Rule 23(a)(3).** The claims asserted by Plaintiffs are typical of  
26 the claims of the Classes, in that the representative plaintiffs, like all class members, were  
27 paid subminimum wages—or nothing at all—while employed by GEO at the Facilities.  
28 Each Plaintiff, like each class member, was subject to similar GEO policies and practices,

1 including the HUSPs, the Work Program, and GEO's policy of deprivation, and each faced  
2 the threats described above if they refused to work and/or would be required to live in  
3 intolerably filthy and unsanitary conditions. Each member of each proposed class has been  
4 similarly injured by GEO's misconduct.

5       257. **Adequacy: Rule 23(a)(4).** Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect the  
6 interests of the classes. Plaintiffs have retained attorneys experienced in class and complex  
7 litigation, including wage and hour class action litigation. Plaintiffs intend to vigorously  
8 prosecute this litigation. Neither Plaintiffs nor their counsel have interests that conflict  
9 with the interests of the other class members.

10       258. **Superiority: Rule 23(b)(3).** Plaintiffs and Class Members have all suffered  
11 and will continue to suffer harm and damages as a result of GEO's wrongful conduct. A  
12 class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of  
13 the controversy. Treatment as a class action will permit a large number of similarly  
14 situated persons to adjudicate their common claims in a single forum simultaneously,  
15 efficiently, and without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual  
16 actions would engender. Class treatment will also permit the adjudication of claims by  
17 many members of the proposed classes who could not individually afford to litigate a  
18 claim such as is asserted in this complaint. This class action likely presents no difficulties  
19 in management that would preclude maintenance as a class action.

20       259. **Rule 23(b)(2).** This action concerns GEO policies and practices that place  
21 every detained individual at Mesa Verde and Golden State Annex in peril of wage theft,  
22 forced labor, attempted forced labor, and serious harm. All members of the California  
23 Wage and Hour Class and the California and Forced Labor Classes seek similar injunctive  
24 relief. Accordingly, final injunctive relief or corresponding declaratory relief is  
25 appropriate respecting the class as a whole.  
26  
27  
28

## CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

### FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF (California Minimum Wage Law) Cal. Labor Code §§ 1182.12, 1194, 1197, 1197.1

260. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference herein all allegations above.

261. The California Legislature set the following minimum wages for 2015 through 2022:<sup>29</sup>

January 1, 2022	\$15.00 for employers with 26 employees or more
January 1, 2021	\$14.00 for employers with 26 employees or more
January 1, 2020	\$13.00 for employers with 26 employees or more
January 1, 2019	\$12.00 for employers with 26 employees or more
January 1, 2018	\$11.00 for employers with 26 employees or more
January 1, 2017	\$10.50 for employers with 26 employees or more
January 1, 2014	\$9.00

262. The minimum wage is an obligation of the employer and cannot be waived by any agreement.

263. Detained immigrants at the Facilities do not forfeit their rights to wage protections.

264. Employees protected by California's minimum wage laws must be paid at least the set hourly minimum wage.

265. Detained immigrants at the Facilities who participate in the Work Program qualify as GEO employees under California law.

266. GEO qualifies as an employer under California law, including IWC Wage Orders 5 and 15.

267. Labor in the immigration detention context is not intended as a punitive measure.

268. GEO and Does 1-10 do not compensate detained immigrants at California's minimum wage for the work they perform or performed at the Facilities. Instead, GEO

<sup>29</sup> See Cal. Dep't of Indus. Rels., *Minimum Wage Frequently Asked Questions*, [https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/faq\\_minimumwage.htm](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/faq_minimumwage.htm) (last visited Dec. 22, 2022); Cal. Lab. Code § 1182.12.



1 pays detained workers \$1 per day—or nothing at all—for work they perform at the  
2 Facilities.

3 269. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members have suffered  
4 damages in an amount to be determined at trial.

5 270. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members are entitled to  
6 recover unpaid minimum wages and other monetary damages, including liquidated  
7 damages.

8 271. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members are entitled to  
9 recover their reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs.

10 272. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members are entitled to  
11 equitable relief, including injunctive and declaratory relief.

12 **SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF**  
13 **(California Unfair Competition Law)**  
**Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, *et seq.***

14 273. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference herein all allegations above.

15 274. California’s Unfair Competition Law (“UCL”) prohibits unfair competition,  
16 defined as “any unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business act or practice and unfair,  
17 deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising and any act prohibited by [California’s False  
18 Advertising Law].”<sup>30</sup>

19 275. GEO and Does 1-10 willfully violated, and continue to violate, the  
20 “unlawful” prong of the UCL by violating California law in its employment practices.

21 276. The acts, omissions, and practices of GEO and Does 1-10 constitute unfair  
22 and unlawful business acts and practices under the UCL in that their conduct offends  
23 public policy against forced labor, and seeks to profit by violating Plaintiffs’ rights under  
24 state and federal law.

25 277. As a direct and proximate result of the unlawful and unfair business practices  
26 of GEO and Does 1-10, Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour Class have suffered  
27

28 <sup>30</sup> Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200.

1 economic injury.

2 278. Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour Class have suffered damages in  
3 an amount to be determined at trial.

4 279. Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour Class are entitled to recover  
5 their reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

6 **THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF**  
7 **(Unjust Enrichment)**  
8 **California Common Law**

8 280. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference herein all allegations above.

9 281. GEO materially and significantly reduced its labor costs and expenses, and  
10 increased its profits, because Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members  
11 perform under- and uncompensated labor.

12 282. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members conferred non-  
13 gratuitous benefits upon GEO by performing work for \$1 per day, or for no pay at all. For  
14 the same work, GEO would otherwise have had to pay at least the applicable minimum  
15 wage or more, thereby significantly and materially increasing GEO's profits. GEO was  
16 unjustly enriched at the expense of and detriment to Plaintiffs and California Wage and  
17 Hour Class Members.

18 283. GEO's retention of any benefit collected directly and indirectly from this  
19 uncompensated labor violated principles of justice, equity, and good conscience.

20 284. As a direct and proximate result of GEO's forced labor practices, Plaintiffs  
21 and California Wage and Hour Class Members have suffered concrete harm and injury,  
22 including physical and emotional injury, monetary loss, and the unlawful violation of their  
23 rights.

24 285. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members have suffered  
25 damages in an amount to be determined at trial.

26 286. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members are entitled to  
27 recover the benefits GEO has unjustly obtained through their under- and uncompensated  
28 labor.

1           287. Plaintiffs and California Wage and Hour Class Members are entitled to  
2 recover their reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

3                                   **FOURTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**  
4                                   **(Forced Labor)**

5                                   **California Trafficking Victims Protection Act – Cal. Civ. Code § 52.5**

6           288. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference herein all allegations above.

7           289. Plaintiffs and California Forced Labor Class Members are victims of forced  
8 labor as defined by California Civil Code § 52.5.

9           290. Pursuant to the California Trafficking Victims Protection Act, California  
10 Civil Code § 52.5, “a victim of human trafficking, as defined in Section 236.1 of the Penal  
11 Code, may bring a civil action for actual damages, compensatory damages, punitive  
12 damages, injunctive relief, any combination of those, or any other appropriate relief.”

13           291. Human trafficking is defined as the deprivation or violation of the personal  
14 liberty of another “with the intent to obtain forced labor or services.”<sup>31</sup>

15           292. Forced labor or services is defined as “labor or services that are performed or  
16 provided by a person and are obtained or maintained through force, fraud, duress, or  
17 coercion, or equivalent conduct that would reasonably overbear the will of the person.”<sup>32</sup>

18           293. GEO and Does 1-10 violate California Civil Code § 52.5 by knowingly  
19 maintaining corporate policies and uniform practices at the Facilities aimed at obtaining  
20 free labor and services from detained workers by:

21                   (a) Forcing or coercing Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class  
22 to perform uncompensated janitorial, maintenance, and other work at the Facilities above  
23 and beyond the four personal housekeeping tasks enumerated in the ICE PBNDS pursuant  
24 to GEO's HUSPs;

25                   (b) Threatening Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class with  
26 serious harm, including solitary confinement, referral to an ICE officer, disciplinary action,

27 <sup>31</sup> Cal. Penal Code § 236.1(a).

28 <sup>32</sup> *Id.* § 236.1(h)(5).

1 loss of privileges and ICE-mandated recreational activities, or even criminal prosecution, if  
2 they refuse to provide their under- or uncompensated labor; and

3 (c) Subjecting Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class to serious  
4 harm, including disciplinary action leading to solitary confinement, referral to an ICE  
5 officer, disciplinary action, loss of privileges and ICE-mandated recreational activities, or  
6 even criminal prosecution, if they refuse to provide their uncompensated labor.

7 (d) Withholding daily necessities from Plaintiffs and the California  
8 Forced Labor Class pursuant to the deprivation policy of GEO and Does 1-10, thereby  
9 forcing them to work for subminimum wages to buy those daily necessities for themselves  
10 and avoid serious harm, including, but not limited to, malnutrition, unsanitary living  
11 quarters, extreme isolation, and unhygienic conditions of confinement.

12 294. In light of GEO's and Doe 1-10's coercive acts and threats of and actual  
13 imposition of serious harm, a reasonable person in Plaintiffs' and the California Forced  
14 Labor Class's shoes would feel compelled to perform work in the Work Program for \$1  
15 per day and to perform uncompensated work.

16 295. GEO materially and significantly reduced its labor costs and expenses, and  
17 increased its profits, by unlawfully forcing and coercing Plaintiffs and the California  
18 Forced Labor Class to perform uncompensated labor. To drive profits, GEO and Doe 1-10  
19 acted with the intent to obtain forced labor or services from the people GEO detains.

20 296. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class have suffered actual  
21 damages in an amount to be determined at trial.

22 297. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class are entitled to recover from  
23 GEO and Does 1-10 all amounts that they have wrongfully and improperly obtained, and  
24 GEO and Does 1-10 should be required to disgorge to Plaintiffs and the California Forced  
25 Labor Class the benefits it has unjustly obtained.

26 298. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class are also entitled to recover  
27  
28

1 compensatory damages.<sup>33</sup>

2 299. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class are also entitled to recover  
3 punitive damages.<sup>34</sup> GEO and Does 1-10 acted with malice, oppression, fraud, and duress  
4 to coerce Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class to participate in the Work  
5 Program for \$1 per day and to perform uncompensated labor.

6 300. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class are also entitled to recover  
7 damages in the amount of three times their actual damages, or \$10,000, whichever is  
8 greater.<sup>35</sup>

9 301. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class are entitled to declaratory  
10 and injunctive relief.

11 302. Plaintiffs and the California Forced Labor Class are entitled to recover their  
12 reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

13 **FIFTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**  
14 **(Forced Labor)**

15 **Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act – 8 U.S.C. §§ 1589(a) and 1594(a)**

16 303. Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class are victims of forced labor as  
17 defined by the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

18 304. 18 U.S.C. §§ 1589(a) and 1594(a) prohibit any entity from knowingly  
19 providing or obtaining the labor of a person “by means of any scheme, plan, or pattern  
20 intended to cause the person to believe that, if that person did not perform such labor or  
21 services, that person or another person would suffer serious harm or physical restraint.”<sup>36</sup>

22 305. Serious harm is defined as “any harm, whether physical or nonphysical,  
23 including psychological, financial, or reputational harm, that is sufficiently serious, under  
24 all the surrounding circumstances, to compel a reasonable person of the same background

25 <sup>33</sup> See Cal. Civ. Code § 52.5(a).

26 <sup>34</sup> See *id.*

27 <sup>35</sup> See *id.* § 52.5(b).

28 <sup>36</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 1589(a).

1 and in the same circumstances to perform or to continue performing labor or services in  
2 order to avoid incurring that harm.”<sup>37</sup>

3 306. GEO and Does 1-10 provide or obtain the labor or services of Plaintiffs and  
4 the Federal Forced Labor Class by means of serious harm and threats of serious harm to  
5 Plaintiffs and others.<sup>38</sup>

6 307. GEO and Does 1-10 have provided or obtained the labor or services of  
7 Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class by means of a scheme, plan, or pattern  
8 intended to cause them to believe that, if they did not perform such labor or services, they  
9 would suffer serious harm or physical restraint, including solitary confinement.<sup>39</sup>

10 308. GEO and Does 1-10 violate 18 U.S.C. §§ 1589(a) and 1594(a) by knowingly  
11 maintaining corporate policies and uniform practices at most of its civil immigration  
12 detention centers aimed at obtaining free labor and services from detained individuals by:

13 (a) Forcing or coercing Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class to  
14 perform uncompensated janitorial, maintenance, and other work at Mesa Verde and  
15 Golden State Annex above and beyond the four personal housekeeping tasks enumerated  
16 in the ICE PBNDS pursuant to GEO’s HUSPs;

17 (b) Threatening Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class with  
18 serious harm, including solitary confinement, referral to an ICE officer, disciplinary action,  
19 loss of privileges and ICE-mandated recreational activities, or even criminal prosecution, if  
20 they refuse to provide their uncompensated labor, organize a work stoppage, or participate  
21 in a work stoppage;

22 (c) Actually subjecting Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class to  
23 serious harm, including disciplinary action leading to solitary confinement, referral to an  
24 ICE officer, loss of privileges and ICE-mandated recreational activities, or even criminal  
25

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26 <sup>37</sup> *Id.* § 1589(c).

27 <sup>38</sup> *Id.* § 1589(a)(1), (a)(2).

28 <sup>39</sup> *Id.* § 1589(a)(4).

1 prosecution, if they refuse to provide their uncompensated labor, organize a work  
2 stoppage, or participate in a work stoppage; and

3 (d) Depriving Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class of daily  
4 necessities, thereby forcing them to work for subminimum wages to buy those daily  
5 necessities for themselves and avoid serious harm, including, but not limited to,  
6 malnutrition, unsanitary living quarters, and unhygienic conditions of confinement.

7 309. GEO materially and significantly reduced its labor costs and expenses, and  
8 increased its profits, by unlawfully forcing and coercing Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced  
9 Labor Class to perform uncompensated labor. To drive profits, GEO and Does 1-10 acted  
10 with the intent to obtain forced labor or services from its detained workers.

11 310. Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class have suffered damages in an  
12 amount to be determined at trial.

13 311. Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class are entitled to recover from  
14 GEO and Does 1-10 all amounts that they have wrongfully and improperly obtained, and  
15 GEO and Does 1-10 should be required to disgorge to Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced  
16 Labor Class the benefits it has unjustly obtained.

17 312. Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class are also entitled to recover  
18 compensatory and punitive damages.

19 313. Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class are entitled to declaratory and  
20 injunctive relief.

21 314. Plaintiffs and the Federal Forced Labor Class are entitled to recover their  
22 reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

23 **SIXTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**  
24 **(Representative Action Pursuant to Private Attorneys General Act of 2004)**  
25 **Cal. Labor Code §§ 2698 *et seq.***

26 315. Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour Class also bring a claim under  
27 California Labor Code §§ 2698 to 2699 in a representative capacity on behalf of all  
28 participants in the Work Program and/or who perform uncompensated work on the  
Facilities in the last four years.



1           316. The California Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004  
 2 (“PAGA”), California Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.*, grants California employees the right to  
 3 bring a civil action for the violation of any provision of the Labor Code on behalf of  
 4 themselves and other current or former employees to recover civil penalties. PAGA is  
 5 intended to assist in the achievement of maximum compliance with state labor laws by  
 6 empowering aggrieved employees to act as private attorneys general to recover civil  
 7 penalties for Labor Code violations that the State would otherwise prosecute.<sup>40</sup>

8           317. On July 13, 2022 pursuant to California Labor Code § 2699.3, Plaintiffs  
 9 submitted notification to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) using  
 10 the LWDA’s electronic filing system of the specific provisions of the Labor Code that  
 11 Plaintiffs allege Defendants violated, including the facts and theories to support the  
 12 violations. That notification included the initial complaint in this action, with all of its  
 13 substantive allegations. The LWDA received Plaintiffs’ notice that same day:  
 14 July 13, 2022. A copy of Plaintiffs’ PAGA complaint and LWDA’s notification email  
 15 confirming receipt of the complaint on July 13, 2022, are appended hereto as **Exhibits A**  
 16 **and B**, respectively.

17           318. On July 28, 2022, Plaintiffs personally served on GEO a copy of the initial  
 18 complaint in this action, identifying the specific provisions of the Labor Code that  
 19 Plaintiffs allege Defendants violated, including the facts and theories to support the  
 20 violations.

21           319. The 65-day time limit for the LWDA to respond to Plaintiffs’ PAGA  
 22 complaint expired on September 16, 2022. The LWDA has not responded to the PAGA  
 23 complaint. Plaintiffs have exhausted their administrative remedies for their PAGA claims.

24           320. PAGA permits an aggrieved employee to collect the civil penalty authorized  
 25 by law and normally collectible by the LWDA. To address violations for which no penalty  
 26 has been established, § 2699(f) creates a private right of action for aggrieved employees  
 27

28 <sup>40</sup> See *Arias v. Superior Ct.*, 46 Cal. 4th 969, 980 (2009).

1 and a default penalty of \$100 for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial  
 2 violation, and \$200 for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent  
 3 violation.<sup>41</sup> Plaintiffs seek to collect these civil penalties for Defendants' Labor Code  
 4 violations under California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 226, 246, 558, 1174, 1182.12,  
 5 1194, 1197, 1197.1, and 1198.5, and IWC Wage Orders 5 and 15.

6 321. The facts underlying Plaintiffs' allegations regarding their minimum wage  
 7 penalties are described above, and Plaintiffs seek PAGA penalties for these claims.

8 322. In addition to the foregoing allegations, Plaintiffs and class members seek  
 9 PAGA penalties for the following violations:

10 (a) California Labor Code § 246 provides that California employees who  
 11 work for an employer for more than thirty day shall accrue paid sick leave "at the rate of  
 12 not less than one hour every 30 hours worked." GEO and Does 1-10 failed to provide  
 13 Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour Class with any paid sick leave in violation of  
 14 Labor Code § 246.

15 (b) California Labor Code § 201 states that an employer is required to pay  
 16 an employee who is terminated all accrued wages and compensation at the time of  
 17 termination. California Labor Code § 202 states that an employer is required to provide an  
 18 employee who resigns all unpaid wages within 72 hours of their resignation, or upon their  
 19 resignation if the employee has provided at least 72 hours' notice. California Labor Code  
 20 § 203 states that if an employer willfully fails to pay compensation promptly upon  
 21 discharge, in violation of §§ 201 and 202, then the employer is liable for waiting time  
 22 penalties equivalent to the employee's daily wage, for a maximum of 30 days. GEO and  
 23 Does 1-10 failed to provide Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour Class with all  
 24 accrued wages and compensation at the time of their terminations and/or resignations.

25 (c) California Labor Code § 1198.5 requires GEO and Does 1-10 to  
 26 provide detained workers the ability to inspect their personnel records and to receive  
 27

28 <sup>41</sup> See Cal. Lab. Code § 2699(f).

1 copies of those records. GEO and Does 1-10 failed to provide Plaintiffs and the California  
2 Wage and Hour Class access to inspect their personnel files and copies of those files.

3 (d) California Labor Code § 226(a) requires GEO and Does 1-10 to  
4 provide detained workers with an accurate itemized statement in writing showing, among  
5 other things: (1) total hours worked by the worker; (2) the name of the worker and only  
6 the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification  
7 number other than a social security number, (3) the name and address of the worker; and  
8 (4) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding  
9 number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the worker. GEO and Does 1-10 have  
10 violated and continue to violate California Labor Code § 226.3 by violating § 226(a) and  
11 failing to provide any wage statement to Plaintiffs and the California Wage and Hour  
12 Class.

13 (e) California Labor Code § 558 provides that any employer who violates  
14 the Labor Code or any provision regulating hours and days of work in any IWC Wage  
15 Order will be subject to civil penalties. Section 558 renders civil penalties available where  
16 an employer fails to pay employees the California minimum wage pursuant to Labor Code  
17 § 1194.<sup>42</sup> Civil penalties awarded pursuant to § 558 are “in addition to an amount  
18 sufficient to recover underpaid wages.”<sup>43</sup> GEO and Does 1-10 are therefore subject to civil  
19 penalties pursuant to § 558 for their failure to pay a minimum wage to Plaintiffs and the  
20 California Wage and Hour Class.

21 323. Plaintiffs are “aggrieved employees” as defined by PAGA and seek to  
22 represent all participants at the Facilities in California in the past four years who performed  
23 work and were paid less than the applicable California minimum wage as required by  
24 California law.

25  
26  
27 <sup>42</sup> See also Cal. Lab. Code § 1182.12.

28 <sup>43</sup> See Cal. Lab. Code § 558(a)(1), (2).

**SEVENTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF  
(Retaliation)  
Cal. Labor Code § 98.6**

324. Plaintiffs Jose Ruben Hernandez Gomez, Pedro Jesus Figueroa Padilla, Fidel Garcia, and Isaac Cardona Hernandez are victims of retaliation as defined by California Labor Code § 98.6.

325. Section 98.6 of the California Labor Code prohibits employers from retaliating “in any manner” against an employee who files a complaint or claim related to his or her rights under the Labor Code, makes “a written or oral complaint that he or she is owed unpaid wages,” or exercises any rights afforded to the employee “on behalf of himself, herself, or others.” Cal. Lab. Code § 98.6(a).

326. In addition to other remedies, an employer who violates § 98.6 “is liable for a civil penalty not exceeding ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per employee for each violation.” *Id.* § 98.6(b)(3). This penalty is “to be awarded to the employee or employees who suffered the violation.” *Id.*

327. GEO and Does 1-10 retaliated against Mr. Hernandez Gomez by placing him in solitary confinement as an alleged COVID-19 precaution despite his lack of symptoms and negative COVID test. GEO and Does 1-10 placed Mr. Hernandez Gomez in solitary confinement within days of the filing of this lawsuit.<sup>44</sup>

328. GEO and Does 1-10 retaliated against Mr. Figueroa by requiring him to take an unnecessary COVID-19 test, after having tested negative a few hours earlier, under threat of solitary confinement and by placing him in solitary confinement. These acts were retaliation for his involvement in this lawsuit and for his role in labor stoppages.

329. A GEO Facility Administrator at Mesa Verde, with final authority for deciding grievances, informed Mr. Figueroa that he would not grant Mr. Figueroa’s

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<sup>44</sup> See *Garcia-Brower v. Premier Auto. Imps. of CA, LLC*, 55 Cal. App. 5th 961, 978 (2020) (“[R]etaliatory motive is ‘proved by showing that plaintiff engaged in protected activities, that his employer was aware of the protected activities, and that the adverse action followed within a relatively short time thereafter.’”)

1 grievances because he did not want substantiated grievances to be used in this lawsuit.  
2 The Facility Administrator refused to find grievances in Mr. Figueroa's favor, even when  
3 video proof conclusively established that Mr. Figueroa's grievance should have been  
4 substantiated.

5 330. GEO and Does 1-10 retaliated against Mr. Garcia by refusing to help when  
6 he requested assistance regarding a cockroach found in another detained person's food.  
7 GEO and Does 1-10 also retaliated against Plaintiff Garcia by charging him with engaging  
8 in or inciting a group demonstration because of his involvement in a protest. These acts  
9 were retaliation for Mr. Garcia's involvement in this lawsuit and for his role in labor  
10 stoppages at the Golden State Annex where he lives.

11 331. GEO transferred Mr. Hernandez Gomez, Mr. Figueroa, Mr. Cardona  
12 Hernandez, Mr. Hernandez Martinez, and other class members to new housing units to  
13 punish and retaliate against them for asserting their rights under the Labor Code and  
14 pursuant to this lawsuit.

15 332. Multiple GEO staff made their knowledge of this lawsuit clear to Plaintiffs.

16 333. Plaintiffs are entitled to compensatory and punitive damages for the  
17 retaliation against them, as well as civil penalties as described above. They are also  
18 entitled to recovery of reasonable litigation expenses and attorneys' fees, as well as  
19 injunctive relief to prevent continued retaliation against them.

#### 20 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

21 **WHEREFORE**, Plaintiffs, individually and on behalf of the classes they seek to  
22 represent, request that the Court:

- 23 1. Certify this action as a class action, with the three classes as defined above;
- 24 2. Find that Plaintiffs are proper representatives of the classes and appoint the  
25 undersigned as class counsel;
- 26 3. Order GEO to pay for notifying class members of the pendency of this suit;
- 27 4. Order disgorgement of GEO's unjustly-acquired revenue, profits, and other  
28 benefits resulting from its unlawful conduct;

1           5.       Award declaratory, restitution, and other equitable relief as is necessary to  
2 protect the interests of Plaintiffs and class members;

3           6.       Award injunctive relief as is necessary to protect the interests of Plaintiffs  
4 and class members, including enjoining GEO from continuing to conduct business through  
5 the unlawful and unfair practices alleged herein and from continuing to retaliate against  
6 Plaintiffs;

7           7.       Award Plaintiffs and class members compensatory damages in the amount of  
8 unpaid minimum wage compensation, including interest thereon subject to proof at trial;

9           8.       Award Plaintiffs and class members liquidated damages in an amount equal  
10 to minimum wages unlawfully unpaid, according to proof, pursuant to California Labor  
11 Code § 1194.2;

12           9.       Award Plaintiffs and class members civil penalties pursuant to California  
13 Labor Code §§ 98.6, 203, 226, 246, 558, and 1198.5, in an amount to be determined at  
14 trial;

15           10.      Order Defendant to pay restitution of all amounts owed to Plaintiffs for  
16 unpaid minimum wages, and interest thereon, in an amount according to proof, pursuant to  
17 Business & Professions Code § 17203;

18           11.      Award Plaintiffs and class members punitive damages, subject to proof at  
19 trial;

20           12.      Award Plaintiffs and class members their reasonable litigation expenses and  
21 attorneys' fees;

22           13.      Award interest on all sums at the maximum legal rate; and

23           14.      Award any further relief that the Court deems just and equitable.

24 ///

25 ///

26 ///

27 ///

28 ///

**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiffs demand a trial by jury.

DATED: December 23, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

ROSEN BIEN GALVAN & GRUNFELD LLP

By: /s/ Ernest Galvan

Ernest Galvan

Attorneys for Plaintiffs